



Deval L. Patrick, Governor
Richard A. Davey, Secretary & CEO

massDOT
Massachusetts Department of Transportation

July 31, 2014

Ron Axelrod
The Charles River Conservancy
Four Brattle Street
Cambridge, MA 02138

Dear Mr. Axelrod,

Thank you for your letter dated July 12 regarding the meeting we had to discuss enhanced connectivity for cyclists, pedestrians, and runners along the Charles River parklands. We appreciate and share your vision for a transportation network that incorporates all modes of travel into a system that is safe, healthy, and sustainable, and that meets the needs of the 21st century and beyond. In fact, our vision is carried out according to our own policies outlined in our GreenDOT Implementation Plan and our adoption of the Complete Streets guidelines.

To that end, we are happy to support the underpass through the Boston abutment of the Anderson Memorial Bridge and engage in the process necessary to ensure the feasibility of this project. I also want to take this opportunity to be clear as to what MassDOT has agreed to at our meeting.

We are retaining the services of Gill Engineering to undertake the necessary design work to advance the construction of an underpass on the Boston side of the Anderson Memorial Bridge to the 25 percent design stage. This work also includes sketch plans, a cost estimate for the construction, and obtaining the permits necessary to allow for construction.

As discussed, the process will involve filing a Notice of Project Change with MEPA to amend previous ENF filing for the ongoing Anderson Memorial rehabilitation project to include construction of an underpass through the Boston abutment. Separately, inclusion of an underpass through the Boston abutment will require authorization from the Army Corps of Engineers, the Massachusetts Historical Commission, and other agencies. Vetting the proposal through these agencies will result in a true determination of the full extent of any environmental or historical impacts there may be, and ways in which those impacts can be properly mitigated. If permitting is successful, we are committed to building this underpass.

If this process demonstrates construction of an underpass on the Boston side of the Anderson Memorial Bridge is feasible, we would be supportive of future Administrations' efforts to include underpasses in the River Street and Western Avenue Bridges as part of the effort to rehabilitate those bridges.

Based on the evidence presented to us, advancing the underpass proposal is a policy decision that is aligned with MassDOT's goals, and is separate from any other project, including future plans to realign the elevated portion of the Turnpike through Allston.

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As you know, the rehab of River Street and Western Avenue has been deferred as we move forward on a project to realign the I-90/Turnpike viaduct in Allston. This massive project seeks to address a series of structural deficiencies along a critical interstate corridor that requires significant upgrades in the near future. While that project's design is under way, we have not yet determined the full extent of any impacts caused by the realignment of the Turnpike, and accordingly have not yet committed to any measures to mitigate those impacts at this time.

I want to thank you for your continued leadership in advocating for transportation improvements that promote healthier living through viable and safe travel choices, and for your tireless efforts to enhance access to the Charles River parklands in a manner that advances our goals of providing a safe, sustainable, and connected transportation network.

Sincerely,



Richard A. Davey

Secretary and CEO of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation.

CC: Ken Kruckemeyer, LivableStreets Alliance
Galen Mook, Boston Cyclists Union
Jon Puz, Cambridge Running Club
Gabriela Romanow, environmental activist
Jack Wofford, mediator and arbitrator